Summary of Scoping Comments
Solid Waste Facilities Master Plan
Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement

August through October 2004
Seattle Public Utilities

Meetings Summary

Seattle Public Utilities issued a Determination of Significance on August 2, 2004 and invited public comment on the scope of the Solid Waste Facilities Master Plan Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) through October 25, 2004. The purpose of the SEIS is to address any potential environmental impacts identified in review of the recommended option of the master plan. SPU hosted three public meetings to discuss the SEIS and solicit comments in Wallingford on August 10, in South Park on August 12, and in West Seattle on October 11, 2004. In addition, neighboring property owners, interested citizens, identified project stakeholders as well as the public at large were invited to send written comments.

Attendees received a presentation on the alternatives for implementing the preferred solid waste facilities option that was selected by the Seattle City Council and Mayor. The option calls for rebuilding the existing recycling and disposal transfer stations and creating a new solid waste intermodal facility. The attendees also received information about SEIS development and the potential environmental impacts to be addressed in the SEIS. Attendees were asked to comment on those potential environmental impacts and suggest additional environmental impacts the City should consider when developing the SEIS.

A majority of the comments about the North Recycling and Disposal Station focused on traffic issues surrounding the station. The recommendation to consider relocating the North Station was also made. Comments on the South Recycling and Disposal Station addressed concerns with landscaping and building design as well as the potential impacts of expanding into a former landfill property. The majority of comments related to creating a new intermodal facility centered on traffic and access concerns. Comments concerning land use compatibility, potential odor, noise, dust, and other impacts also were raised for all three facilities.

Although the purpose of the meetings was to collect comments on the scope of the SEIS, several questions arose related to the project purpose, cost, and selection of the recommended option as well as concerns with existing facilities, particularly related to traffic, noise, dust, odors, and rats. These comments will be addressed through the appropriate channels separate from the SEPA process. Fact sheets 1, 2, and 3 address the project history, process, and criteria for selecting the recommended option.

Comments collected at these public meetings and received via email or mail are summarized below.

SCOPING COMMENTS/ISSUES

ALTERNATIVES

- Add a new alternative to study the benefits and impacts of moving the North Recycling and Disposal Station (NRDS) to Interbay or another North of Elliott Bay relocation.
- Add an alternative that would combine the intermodal facility and NRDS on one site such as Interbay.
- Add the BINMIC Interbay area as an alternative site for the new intermodal facility.
- Add an alternative that would combine both transfer stations and the intermodal onto one site.
- Add an alternative that eliminates operation of NRDS and just leaves the SRDS operational.
- Add an alternative that rebuilds NRDS without expanding its footprint.

REBUILDING TRANSFER STATION – NORTH

Traffic

- Consider the adverse impacts of customer traffic on the surrounding residential streets and consider traffic restrictions to mitigate those impacts.
- Consider the size and class of streets to handle the traffic.
- Would traffic flow to the station remain about the same?
- Currently, there is too much truck traffic on surrounding streets, and on N. 34th Street in particular.
- Vehicles on N. 34th Street drive too fast, and instead of slowing down for drivers exiting or entering the transfer station, they swerve into the oncoming lane to go around the slower vehicle. This is a danger for eastbound and westbound traffic, but westbound is worse. Traffic flow in this area needs to be studied.
- Consider changing Woodlawn North Avenue and Densmore N. Ave. to northbound one-way streets. There's already a one-way street nearby that was created to force self-haulers to use the main arterial.
- Consider making the entrance from the main arterial [N. 34th St.] the only option.
- Currently, the queue on N. 34th St. to get into the transfer station can be a major obstacle. For example, it's hard to turn onto 34th from smaller streets because the queue can block the way. The queue creates dangerous driving conditions on N. 34th St. and nearby side streets.
- The new transfer station should designate a separate lane for compacted loads.
- Consider floatplane traffic overhead that is affected by building height.

Litter/Dumping

- Litter from uncovered loads is a problem in the neighborhood.
- The Cover Your Load regulation should be more strictly enforced.

- The transfer station helps minimize illegal dumping in the neighborhood.

Air Quality

- Currently, dust and particulates are a problem and potential health hazard for immediate neighbors and users of the nearby portion of the Burke-Gilman trail.
- In the metal recycling area, people dump asbestos covered items that are then crushed and compacted, which can release asbestos particles into the air.
- Currently, the facility is very odorous, which affects residential neighbors and users of the nearby portion of the Burke-Gilman trail.
- There is often an onshore wind from Lake Union that blows the dust and odor to nearby residences, including a home immediately north of the transfer station. The misting system used at the transfer station is inadequate.
- Currently, on-site outdoor storage of compost contributes a lot to odors, especially after hours.
- A resident across the street from the station indicated that his house would be a good location to study dust, noise, and odor.

Noise

- Currently, noise pollution from the facility operation is a problem.
- Noise carries well to N. 35th Street. The time of day that noise is created is important. For example, noise is especially aggravating early on weekend days.

Location

- Current location is convenient, which encourages use of the facilities.
- Move the transfer station away from the neighborhood to another neighborhood, such as Interbay.
- What impact will an improved facility have on property values?
- Concern about land-use compatibility of a transfer station in a predominantly residential neighborhood.
- Consider loss of parking opportunities at 1550 N. 34th Street and impact on local businesses.

Visual Design/Lighting

- It's much better when the outside lights are turned off. Consider having shades to direct outside light down to minimize stray light pollution.
- Consider impact of the building height on views; maintain or lower the existing roofline height.
- Existing view corridors must be maintained.

Drainage

- Study drainage issues through and off transfer station site. There are many buried ephemeral streams in Wallingford. Look at the old main that runs under the site. The main on Ashworth North may have been its replacement.

Construction Impacts

- What will happen to solid waste while the transfer station is demolished and the new one built?

Plants & Animals

- Eagles fly through the area of the transfer station site.
- Study designing the new facility's roof as wildlife habitat or a "green roof." Birds live on the roof currently and use water puddles when it rains.

Health/Nuisance

- Residences near the transfer station have rat problems that potentially pose health risks. Bones are found around nearby residences, possibly left by rats or crows. This problem must be alleviated.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS - NORTH

- The recycling operation needs to be monitored/staffed.
- The proposed recycling/re-use store is an economic boon to schools, non-profits, etc. as source of inexpensive materials.
- The proposed facility should be used for educational purposes.
- Community involvement should be emphasized.
- Current facilities are antiquated.
- Impacts on economic development should be considered.
- Include a plan for recovering reusable scrap.

REBUILDING TRANSFER STATION – SOUTH

Noise
Air Quality and Odor
Plant and Animal Impacts
Transportation

- Mitigation measures associated with these issues should be developed.

Aesthetics/Landscaping

- Improve landscaping
- Consider green roofs and other environmentally friendly features.
- Mitigation measures should take into account that the property abuts residential uses. Sidewalks and vegetated buffers should be incorporated into any use of the Landfill Property under the plan.

Earth

- Significant portions of the Landfill Property may require capping that meets applicable regulatory standards.
- The presence of buried garbage may require special consideration for construction.

Water

- Groundwater encountered in any excavation at the Landfill Property will have to be properly stored and treated or disposed.
- Surface water issues must be addressed due to the large ditch that transects the Landfill Property and the ditch located alongside the west side of the Landfill Property.

Hazardous Substances

- Need to address potential disturbance of contaminated soils, buried garbage, and methane gas if expanding into the King County Landfill Property.
- The Landfill Property is currently enrolled in the Voluntary Cleanup Program under the auspices of the Washington State Department of Ecology. Remedial actions will need to be approved by Ecology, the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency, and the Seattle-King County Department of Health.

Land Use

- The expansion of the SRDS onto King County Landfill Property may not be the highest and best use.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS/COMMENTS – SOUTH

- Equity is a problem: the larger, taller facility is in a poorer area, compared to the North Transfer Station.
- If fewer than the proposed 20 acres were used, would capacity needs arise again in the near future?
- It is a good idea to keep adjoining property in public ownership.

POTENTIAL NEW INTERMODAL STATION

Air Quality

- The Duwamish waterway already has the poorest air quality in the City, and adding about 200 more trucks a day will make it worse.
- Consider use of clean-fuel burning garbage trucks.
- Concern with the impact potential odors might have on the quality of life and redevelopment of Georgetown and Beacon Hill.
- Concern that nearby residential areas already suffer noise, dust and pollution impacts from Birmingham Steel, the Port of Seattle, and other industrial facilities.
- Concern about odor impacts to nearby residents and on Port-based tourism.
- Consider impact of trains on air quality.
- Study the impact of odor on the Spokane Street corridor, Harbor Avenue, neighborhoods that climb the hillside that flanks Harbor Avenue.

Water Quality

- There are currently efforts to improve the water quality in the Duwamish Head/Duwamish River area. Consider the effect of seepage and runoff from the intermodal station on already poor water quality.

- Consider the impact of the facility on Longfellow Creek, particularly if SPU plans to barge traffic in the future.

Land Use
- Question whether this is the best or most appropriate use for the site on Harbor Island.
- Question whether the land use for an intermodal facility on Harbor Island is compatible with the travel/tourism industry in Elliott Bay.
- Question whether an intermodal facility at Airport Way is compatible due to proximity to legitimate residential uses south of Lucile Street and at Sunny Arms artist loft cooperative north of Edmunds Street.
- Use of a deep-water port site on Harbor Island as a solid waste facility may not be best use of site.
- Address concerns relating to potential conflicting land uses near an airport and impacts on airport operations and airspace safety.
- Concern that Alternatives 4 and 5 will directly affect residential areas and require businesses to move.
- Concern regarding hardship on business properties already impacted by State DOT and Sound Transit takings.
- Consider impact on unique uses and needs of the Puget Sound Energy's Georgetown Facility.
- Concern that South Seattle residents bear a greater proportion of the burden of unwanted facilities.

Visual Impacts/Aesthetics
- Concern about the effect of a visible intermodal station on Port-based tourism.

Noise
- Trains on Harbor Island create a lot of noise in West Seattle. Would additional trains necessitated by the intermodal station have noise abatement procedures, e.g. limited hours of operation?
- Concern about train whistle noise, particularly at night.
- Concern about noise from increased truck traffic.

Litter
- Concern about the potential impact of increased litter and trash in parks and roadsides due to transportation of waste into Georgetown and Beacon Hill.

Plants & Animals
- Study impacts to marine life and possibility of small-scale habitat restoration for Harbor Island sites.

Transportation/Traffic
- Traffic impacts should be studied, including combined impacts from a combined city/county intermodal; it sounds like too much more traffic in a currently

congested area. Also consider impacts to economically important, Port-based businesses.
- Look at flexibility of site for access to roads, rail, and barge or shipping infrastructures.
- Concern that Alternatives 4 and 5 would increase traffic through Georgetown's revitalizing center.
- Consider a new southbound freeway on-ramp to route truck traffic away from Georgetown.
- Traffic impacts should be studied in conjunction with plans for the Alaskan Way Viaduct and the monorail and impact of both partial and complete interruption of service on the Alaskan Way viaduct during a prolonged period of construction.
- Traffic study should look at what road improvements are funded and likely to happen.
- Transportation studies should evaluate access to Harbor Island by the two bridges; the flat bridge is in poor repair.
- Trucks are often backed up on Harbor Island already. Trucks entering Terminal 18 back up westbound access to the island.
- The West Seattle bridge near I-5 is often jammed already.
- On northbound East Marginal Way South, there is often a backup of trucks waiting to turn by the last exit before the viaduct.
- Some traffic back-ups due to trains crossing – which train tracks would intermodal serve in the future? Consider the effect of increased train crossings on auto traffic.
- Concern that Harbor Island alternatives will negatively impact east-west traffic.
- How will the project impact West Seattle?
- Traffic study should look at impact on emergency services as well as impact on commuters.
- Recommendation to consult with garbage truck drivers.
- Concern for impact on traffic at Swift and Albro. This set of intersections is already overloaded during the evening rush and includes METRO buses, concrete trucks, gas trucks, etc. This interchange is only one of two with access to Beacon Hill.
- Consider looking at operational strategies such as conducting garbage pickup at night to reduce traffic load.
- Traffic study should include accurate estimates of anticipated private packer trucks and other users in addition to the SPU vehicles.
- Traffic study should consider mix of vehicles and resulting safety issues from increased trucks.

Rail Impacts
- Address impact on rail system.
- Address capacity of rail bridge to handle new train, particularly if the existing bridge is compromised in some way.
- Consider the effect of increased train traffic due to a new intermodal station on other economically important, Port-based train traffic.

Site Access

- Consider what will happen to the garbage transfer system if road or rail access to Harbor Island is cut-off, either due to accident, construction, or earthquake.

Seismic

- Study impact of a major earthquake on facility operations.

Cultural Resources

- Address possible impacts to cultural resources.